Autobiography of a Writer

I believe writing is an essential tool that everyone can benefit from using. Not just being able to write down information, but really get into a piece of writing and be able to express themselves in a way other than speaking. I started writing ever since I can remember. I grew up my whole life with a dad who was an English teacher. Even before Kindergarten he would have my brother and I writing in journals to the best of our ability and we would be rewarded for doing so. This created a positive writing experience for me at a young age. As I grew a little and began school I always loved writing. Getting to free write and draw pictures in my notebook was always my favorite part of the day. I always liked being able to share my stories and my life to my peers and teachers. In the summers, my dad started making my brother and I write in our journals every morning after breakfast. This meant we were not allowed to go outside and play until our journal for the day was done. I hated that. I hated knowing that I was not able to go play in the summer sun if I didn’t write in my journal. This didn’t so much turn me off to writing, but it was not something I thoroughly enjoyed. Overall, as a young student in elementary I always loved my teachers and enjoyed writing very much.

Then middle school came along. I have very distinct memories of middle school because I hated my 6th grade language arts teacher. She was so terribly mean and did not have a care in the world for how her students felt. Specifically, one time she gave us the writing assignment of a research paper. We had to do research on an animal of our choosing, and I chose African Elephants. I loved this assignment because I was so excited to learn about one of my favorite animals and all of the elephant’s characteristics. Part of our assignment was to give a presentation and dress up either like our animal or someone who would work with the animal (zoo keeper, safari leader, and veterinarian). I was so pumped because I had a cool wild life shirt my grandma had got be on a safari in Africa. I thought this was going to be perfect! Then I got my grade back on my paper and she had took points off because I didn’t dress up. I was livid! I was in 6th grade and did the best I could to not only pull off a research paper, but dress up as well. For the rest of the school year I was turned off by writing and didn’t even want to try hard because I felt that it wasn’t going to be good enough.

When I got to high school I really started to get into writing and become a stronger writer. I think it was because I was very internal with my feelings and I started to journal. I learned how to express myself in writing and get my thoughts and feelings figured our through writing. Middle/High school is sometimes a very hard time for teenagers and I believe writing is a great tool to use when dealing with certain issues, good or bad. I don’t specifically remember any one writing that had strong meaning to me during that time, I just remember really loving to write and being fairly good at it. My teachers definitely had impact on me because they were all so awesome. I believe I got very lucky in High School because I was never placed in the “bad teachers” classrooms.

College is a whole different story. I have a love/hate relationship with writing in college. Being in the special education program there are many different forms of writing I have done. From writing IEPs to 20 page behavioral plans. I love that type of writing because I am interested in it. In one of my English classes our final project was a 20 page paper comparing and contrasting two very different parts of books. I hated that just because it felt repetitive and boring. I feel that I have grown as a writer in college because of all the different types of writing I have experienced. I really know that I only truly like writing about topics that interest me. If it doesn’t interest me I obviously still do the work that is expected of me, I just don’t like it.

I am inspired to write by the experiences that surround me. My love for writing came from keeping a journal and writing down my experiences and memories. When something positive happens I want to write it down so I can remember and reminisce. Then when something negative happens I want to write it down to also remember, but to mostly learn from the mistakes or bad times. I have always been inspired by the writing pieces of J.K. Rowling. I think her work is elegant and beautiful. I am not a huge Harry Potter fan; however, I enjoyed reading the books just based on the way Rowling so elegantly and sophisticatedly wrote her books.

Writing is sometimes hard for me based on where I am and what I am doing. I cannot write in a loud noisy place with lots of people and distraction. I think writing in a quiet environment makes it easier to be able to listen to my thoughts and process what I am trying to say in a more meaningful manor. I love being cozy and comfortable when I am writing in a journal, and I like to be at a desk or table when I need to buckle down and seriously focus on writing. Regardless, it needs to be quiet!

In my life I have found that when I am going through a difficult time I write more than I usually would. I think that is why I am so passionate about certain variations of writing because I know personally how much it helps emotionally. As a future educator I want my students to have many tools to be able to express themselves in way that do not harm them or others around them. Some students are very quiet and kept to themselves, where some are so outspoken and willing to share anything. As a future educator I will express to my students how important it is to have a safe place to put their thoughts and feelings.

So far in the course we have read a few chapters regarding writing workshops and essential tools to use in our future classrooms. We have also read a few great articles elaborating off of some of the information we have read. Right in the beginning of Ray’s book, she discussed the different between the writing process and a writing workshop. This really drew me into the book because it was something I didn’t really distinguish as two separate tools. Growing up, the writing process and writing workshops were discussed as a whole and there was no difference. Reading and really understanding the difference is critical not only for a future educator, but for student’s as well. Being able to break down the writing process and use the tools to create amazing work in writing workshops is important for students to see so they know why and how what they are creating. In this first chapter, Ray also discusses the importance of environment. “The environment of the workshop is often filled with so many more possibilities than is a room where students do the writing process.” (Ray, 5). Our students need to know that their writing is not limited to their desks in a classroom, but expanded to anywhere at any time. Giving them the possibilities to be able to express and explore their writing will expand not only their ideas, but their way of looking at the world.

I was very interested in the “*reading as a writer’s work*” section. This sections discusses why reading is so critical to writing. “We must make room for reading.” (Ray, 65) This simple quote meant so much. Children need to be exposed to different books, genres, and authors to get a sense of what different writing is like. Some children may want to write a movie script, or love poems, and even horror stories. With exposure they are able to bring more ideas to the table and expand what they want to write. Ray also states “Good writers need to bring lots of ideas to their desks, not sit there and try to think things up.” These two sections go hand in hand. The more children are exposed to whether it be books, videos, ideas, and even nature; the more they will be able to create. I don’t want my students sitting at their desks for 30 minutes trying to figure out what they are going to write; I want my students excited and ready to write what they want to!

In my classroom I want my students’ writing experience to be enjoyable. Of course not everyone is going to love writing, but I want to try my absolute best to make the experience great. My students will know that my classroom is a safe environment and they can express themselves through writing as much as they feel comfortable. My classroom writing environment will be based on what is best for my students. If some want to lay on the floor, sit at their desks, or have complete silence I will do my best to meet all of their needs. I will also do everything that I can to expose my students not only to different books and authors, but I will try to expose them to different experiences as well. As a future educator, I am willing and excited to teach my students how to write and be good writers.